

'I told him not to join that stupid club.'

— Cobain's mom, talking about dead rock 'n' roll stars

Nirvana singer dead

Suicide note near body in Kurt Cobain's apartment

By ROBERT SAIZ HOLGUIN
Associated Press

Kurt Cobain, the troubled lead singer of the hugely popular grunge rock band Nirvana, was found dead Friday in his Seattle apartment of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. He was 28.

"We are all devastated by the unbelievable tragedy of Kurt Cobain's death," Ed Rosenblatt, president of Nirvana label Geffen Records, said in a statement announcing the death.

Before the announcement, a police source in Seattle confirmed the man found dead in Cobain's home Friday was the singer-songwriter.

For the record, officials said a man roughly Cobain's age had been found shot to death at the home, a suicide note nearby.

The body, described as that of a white male in his 20s, was discovered by an electrician who went to the home this morning to do some work, said police spokeswoman Vinette Tlchi.

Nirvana pioneered grunge rock and is known for the multimillion-selling 1991 album "Nevermind," which featured the hit "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Another best-selling album, "In Utero," was issued last year. Cobain wrote the music and anguished lyrics to most of their songs.

In Aberdeen, Cobain's mother, Wendy O'Connor, said her son had been missing for six days and that she feared he would be found dead.

She said she had no official confirmation the dead man was her son, but said, "Now he's gone and joined that stupid club," referring to the early deaths of such rock stars as Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison.

"I told him not to join that stupid club," she said.

In early March, Cobain spent several days in a Rome hospital after falling into a drug-and-alcohol-induced coma.

Tlchi said the body, found in a cottage apartment above a detached garage, had been there about a day. The man had suffered a shotgun wound to the head. She gave no detail on the content of the suicide note.

When he fell ill last month, Cobain had reportedly gone to Rome with his wife, Courtney Love, also a singer, and their daughter to recover from health problems that had forced the band to cancel two

recent concert dates in Europe.

Along with rival Pearl Jam, the three-member Nirvana made Seattle a leading center of alternative pop music, and the grunge look was even picked up by fashion designers.

Michael Azerrad, author of "Come As You Are: The Story of Nirvana," said the songs are so popular because they speak to the worries of people in their 20s.

"The divorce, the violence, the drugs, the diminished opportunities for an entire generation — that is so crucial to the sound of their music and the success of their music," he said in a 1993 Associated Press interview.

"The band translated that pain and anger and confusion into musical soundwaves very directly that hit a nerve among a large amount of kids,"

Azerrad said.

Love, lead singer of the rock band Hole, also was treated for heroin use, her lawyer said while filing a lawsuit against her doctor last year. The couple's daughter, Frances, was born in 1992.

Love's band is known for the albums "Pretty in the Inside" and a new one, "Live Through This."

Cobain was the product of a gritty boyhood in Aberdeen, a rough-and-tumble coastal logging town.

In a Los Angeles Times interview last fall, he recalled being intensely alienated from most of his boyhood acquaintances when he sought painting rather than sports and a life beyond work in the woods, on the docks or at lumber mills in town.

"Yeah, you know, there were a lot of Beavis and Butt-Heads back there," he said. "The only difference is they weren't as clever as the guys on TV."



Kurt Cobain, lead singer of Nirvana, in a concert photo taken last year. Police and record company officials confirmed Friday that the man found dead in Cobain's Seattle home was the singer-songwriter. Last month, Cobain was taken to a Rome hospital after overdosing on champagne and barbiturates.



File photo

Kurt Cobain cofounded Nirvana in 1987. The band's following became huge after its 1991 album "Nevermind."

Nirvana lead singer found dead in Seattle

BY GEORGEA KOVANIS

Free Press Staff Writer

Jeff McCracken was shopping at the Harmony House in Hazel Park when he heard Kurt Cobain was dead. He sat down, teary-eyed, and tried to make sense of it.

"I have this feeling this is going to be like a Jim Morrison thing," said McCracken, 24, of Hazel Park. "Ten years from now, people will still be talking about it. About why he did it. Personally, I wonder if it was the fame thing. Fame looks like a pot of gold. Maybe when he got there and got it, it was empty."

Cobain, 27, the slight, blond lead singer for Nirvana, was found dead Friday in his Seattle home of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Investigators found a suicide note but did not disclose its contents. Cobain had a history of drug use and health problems.

He and his Seattle-based band spoke to a generation of teenagers and twentysomethings through cynical, anguished lyrics and a sound that came to be known as grunge.

Cobain's mother, Wendy O'Connor, said he had been missing for six days and that she feared he would be found dead.

"Now he's gone and joined that stupid club," she said, referring to the early deaths of rock stars such as Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison. "I told him not to join that stupid club."

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A friend consoles Nirvana fan Renae Ely, right, on Friday near the Seattle home of Nirvana lead singer Kurt Cobain, who apparently committed suicide.

ROBERT SORBO/Associated Press

KURT COBAIN AND NIRVANA: A CHRONOLOGY

- **1987:** Cobain cofounds the band with bassist Krist Novoselic in Aberdeen, Wash.
- **1988:** Nirvana releases "Bleach" album on the Sub Pop Label.
- **October 1989:** The little known Nirvana is on an unsuccessful midwest tour and plays Ann Arbor's Blind Pig. The crowd there numbers 300, the largest on the tour. Nirvana draws as few as 30 people in other cities.
- **1991:** After a series of drummers came and went, drummer Dave Grohl joins the band. They release the "Nevermind" album on the Geffen label. The album includes the band's hit "Smells Like Teen Spirit."
- **October 1991:** Nirvana plays Detroit's St. Andrews Hall to a sold-out crowd of 1,000.
- **1992:** Nirvana releases "Incesticide," also on the Geffen label.
- **February 1992:** Cobain marries singer Courtney Love.

- **June 1993:** Seattle police arrest Cobain for allegedly assaulting Love during a domestic argument.
- **September 1993:** Nirvana releases "In Utero" on the Geffen label. Some stores refuse to sell the album, citing its language and cover design.
- **October 1993:** Nirvana plays the State Fair Coliseum. The concert sells out, with 7,500 people in attendance. Rae Cline of Windsor's CIMX-FM radio says Cobain seems happy and content taking care of his daughter.
- **January 1994:** Cobain tells Rolling Stone that he's happier than he's ever been in his life.
- **March 1994:** Cobain goes into a coma after overdosing on alcohol and drugs in Rome. He recovers and returns to Seattle to recuperate.
- **April 8, 1994:** An electrician discovers Cobain dead in his Seattle apartment. Authorities say Cobain died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. He was 27.

Authorities find suicide note near Nirvana singer Kurt Cobain, 27

NIRVANA, from Page 1A

told him not to join that stupid club."

Cobain's death came a month after he was hospitalized in Rome for a drug and alcohol-induced coma.

Fans said his death will leave a permanent mark.

"He's the first so-called leader of the Slacker Generation to have died just like" Janis Joplin, said Rob Robar, 25, of Highland.

Added Erin Neubacher, 16, of Huntington Woods: "The reason it's so depressing is because his music had meaning to us.

"You definitely look up to people whose music you listen to. He was a role model because people liked his music and respected that he had a family and a daughter."

Cobain's wife, Courtney Love, is a singer with the punk alternative band Hole. The couple have a 2-year-old daughter, Frances Bean. The family appeared to be getting over its troubles after Cobain's overdose on champagne and tranquilizers.

Cobain had returned to Seattle to recuperate.

Recent reports said Nirvana was about to break up, and earlier this week the band dropped out as the scheduled headliners of this summer's Lollapalooza tour.

When Craig Burkes, 16, of Royal Oak heard the news, he rushed to a Royal Oak record store to buy a Nirvana T-shirt and poster. It was the only way he could think to pay tribute.

"Kids are who he wanted to listen," said Burkes. "That's who should care now that he's dead."

But few fans said they were stunned by Cobain's death.

"I can't say that it was a complete shock, but I really didn't expect him to die," said Rae Cline, promotions manager for the alternative rock radio station CIMX-FM (88.7). Cline had known Cobain since 1989 when the then little-known Nirvana played at Ann Arbor's Blind Pig. "I certainly didn't expect him to kill himself."

She called Cobain an "anti-hero" rock star who never seemed comfortable with his fame and eschewed the limelight.

Said Shane Gibson, 16, of Hazel Park: "Kurt spoke for a new wave of how music should be played. He's the one who put Seattle on the map. I enjoyed his music, but I've lost respect for him. I think a lot of his die-hard fans will really be at a loss. I see this as a way of Kurt cheating everyone."

Cobain cofounded the trio in 1987 with bassist Krist Novoselic in Aberdeen, Wash., a working class community. With the addition of drummer Dave Grohl, the band sold millions of copies of its 1991 breakthrough album "Nevermind," which featured the hit "Smells Like Teen Spirit." "In Utero," was issued last year and banned at some stores because of controversial cover art and song titles such as "Rape Me."

But Nirvana's coarse and angry lyrics are part of the band's appeal.

Ian Sparbeck, 15, of Huntington Woods, said he was remembering Cobain by wearing his Nirvana T-shirt.

"I wear it all the time," he said, "but I'm wearing it today for a reason.

"I'm not taking it off for a week."

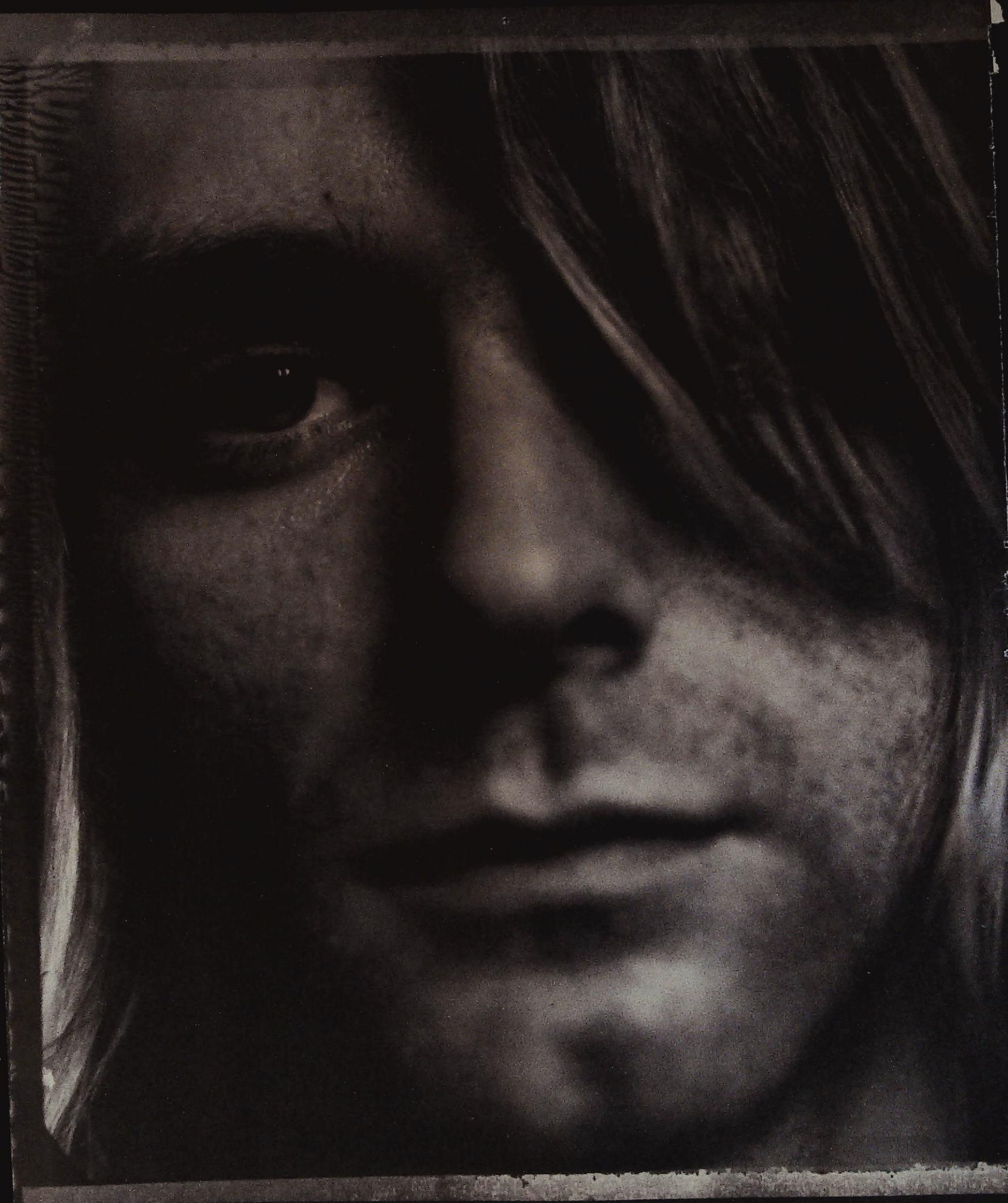
Staff Writers Carol Teegardin and Anderson Jones and *Flye* Press wires contributed to this report.

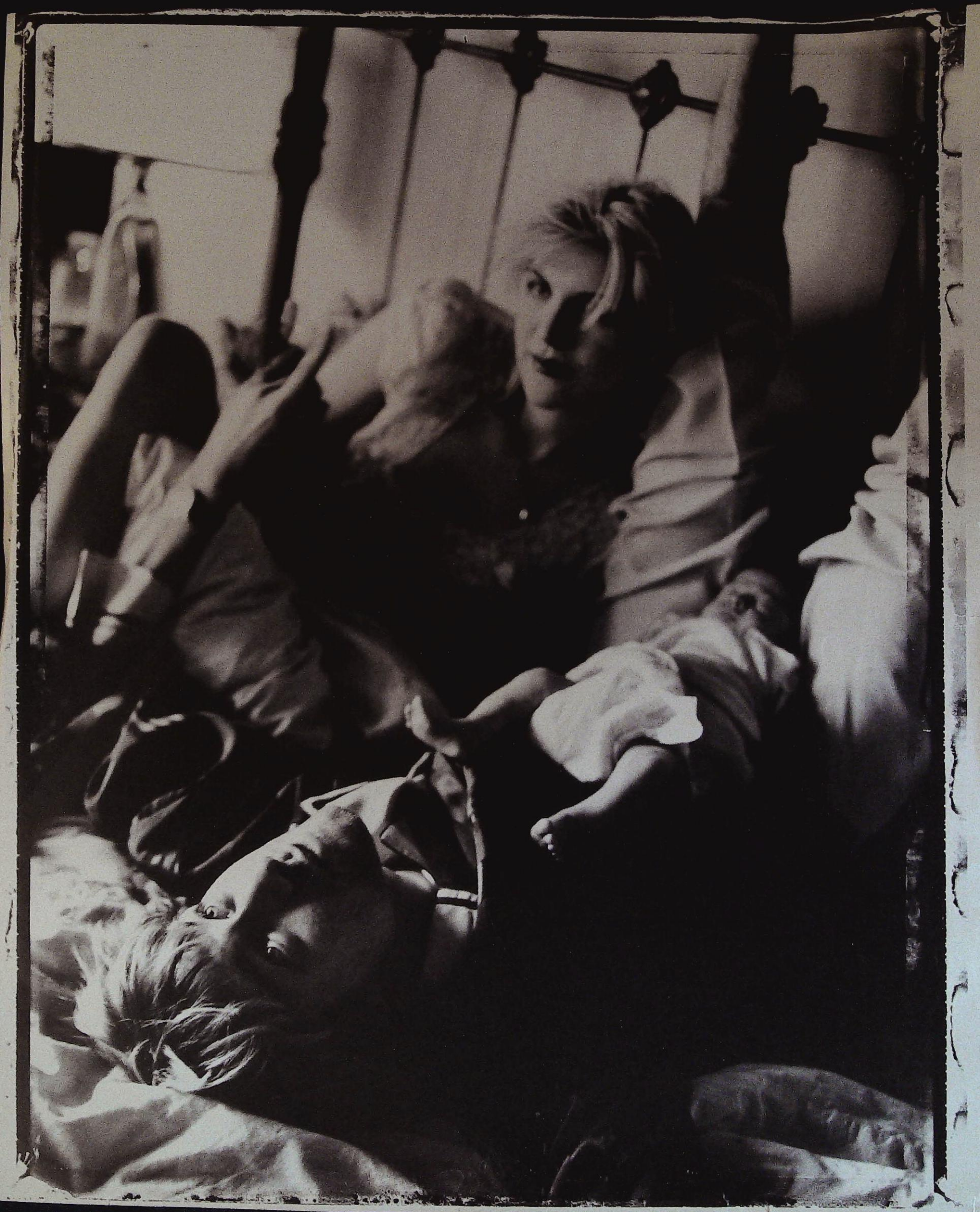
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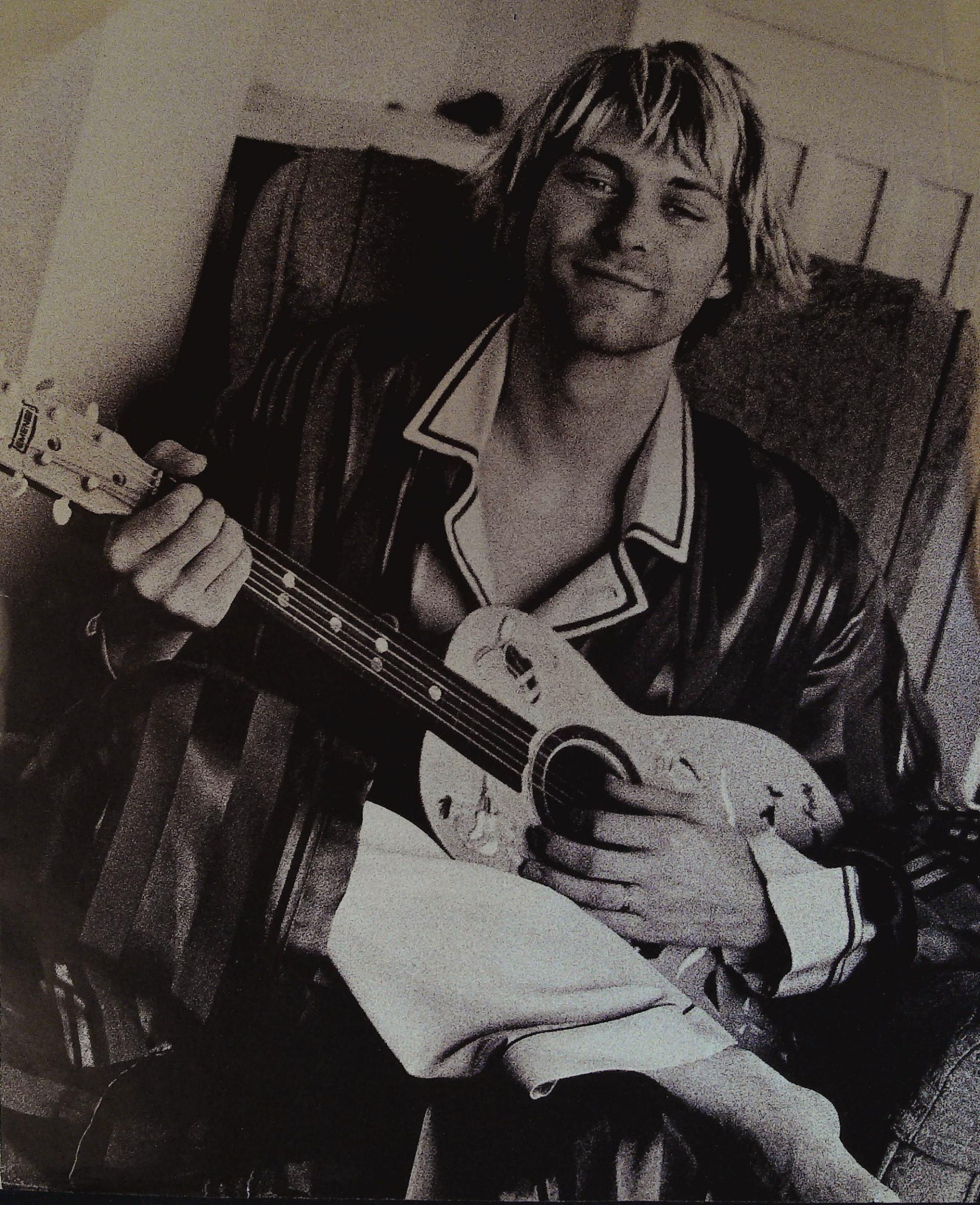
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Kurt
Cobain
1967-1994













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▲ Doctors said the quick response of Courtney Love, who called for help when she found her husband unconscious, saved his life.

HARDLY NIRVANA

Rocker Kurt Cobain has a brush with death

THE STORY HAD A FAMILIAR RING: A young rock star with a history of drug abuse is felled by an accidental overdose in a European hotel room. Kurt Cobain, 27, the iconoclastic lead singer of the breakthrough grunge band Nirvana, had checked into Suite 541 of Rome's Excelsior Hotel on March 2 for a much-needed respite in the midst of the band's world tour. The next day Cobain's wife, Courtney Love, 28, lead singer of the neo-punk band Hole, flew in from Lon-

don to join him, putting up their daughter Frances Bean, 1½, and the child's nanny in the suite next door. That evening, Cobain and Love ordered a small dinner from room service and settled in for the night. Bothered by chronic throat pain and flu symptoms that had forced him to cancel two shows in Germany the previous week, Cobain took a combination of the prescription drug Rohypnol, a Valium-like tranquilizer available in Europe, and chlorylhydrate, a prescription anesthetic. Then, though he rarely drinks, he shared some champagne with Love, whom he hadn't seen in a month.

That was all it took. By the time Love awoke the next morning at about 5:30, Cobain was lying on the floor near the bed in a coma. At first it looked as if Cobain had ventured down the same path of self-destruction that had claimed

such earlier rock icons as Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix. In fact, at least one early report had him dead.

Fortunately for Cobain, that report was greatly exaggerated. After being rushed to Rome's Umberto I Polyclinic Hospital, Cobain had his stomach pumped and was transferred to Rome American Hospital, where he regained consciousness later that afternoon. "He was overwhelmed," says Love, by the volume of cards and flowers he received from fans. He was discharged four days later. Said Osvaldo Galletta, the doctor who treated him: "He was in a life-threatening condition when he arrived, but now he's in good shape."

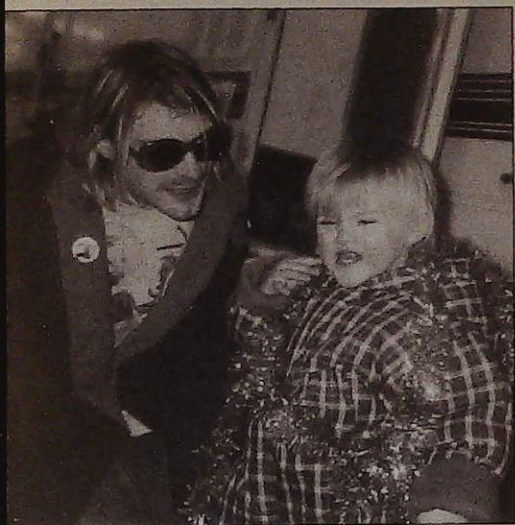
Ironically, the incident occurred at a time when Cobain seemed to be more at peace with himself than he had been in years. When he and Nirvana bandmates Krist Novoselic

► Nirvana biographer Michael Azerrad says Cobain (center, with bandmates Krist Novoselic, left, and Dave Grohl) is "very shy and not psychologically equipped to handle fame."

▼ Cobain (with Frances last December) has said he and Love became nearly suicidal when authorities tried to take their daughter away because of their drug use: "It just seemed hopeless."



STEVE JENNINGS/LGI



ALICE WHEELER/RETNA LTD.

and Dave Grohl propelled their roiling guitars and slurred lyrics into the mainstream in 1991 with the album *Nevermind*—which sold more than 10 million copies worldwide—and its hit single, "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Cobain seemed a man on the edge. Known for his screaming vocals and onstage guitar-smashing, the singer often acted out offstage as well, making threatening phone calls to unauthorized biographers, trashing other bands' music and even mocking segments of Nirvana's audience.

Much of his anger, Cobain has said, is a legacy of his childhood in the logging town of Aberdeen, Wash. His parents divorced when he was 8, and his preference for music and art over sports made him an outcast and a punching bag for the town's jocks. Years later, as Nirvana went from northwest cult band to global megaband, Cobain nursed his image as a tortured artist, a brooding recluse furious at being sucked into the mainstream he had always railed against. Called the spokesperson for the twentysomething generation, Cobain declared in 1992, "I don't want to be no f--king spokesperson."

Both Cobain and Love had also battled heroin addiction, which jeopardized custody of their daughter when child-welfare authorities suspected they were using during Love's pregnancy. They have admitted they used the drug, but Love says she did not use it after discovering she was pregnant, and Cobain says he quit soon after. (The baby was born healthy.) "I knew that when I had a child I'd be overwhelmed, and it's true," Cobain told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1992. "I can't tell you how much my atti-

tude has changed since we've got Frances. Holding my baby is the best drug in the world."

Michael Azerrad, author of the 1993 book *Come As You Are: The Story of Nirvana*, credits Love with bringing about the changes in Cobain. "Contrary to popular belief, Courtney is actually a very good influence, especially in terms of substance abuse and things like that," he says. "I think getting married and having a child really did wonders for him. He's pretty intensely in love with Courtney, and he loves his baby."

By midweek, Cobain and Love were back in their new home in Seattle overlooking Lake Washington. In a statement released to concert promoters, the band announced it was postponing its remaining European concerts, explaining, "Kurt Cobain will recover fully from last week's incident. However, he will need time to recuperate." But Nirvana will go on. Said a source close to the group: "The incident, if anything, brings the band closer together."

■ CYNTHIA SANZ

■ CRAIG TOMASHOFF in Los Angeles, GABRIELLE SAVERI in Rome and VICKIE BANE in Seattle

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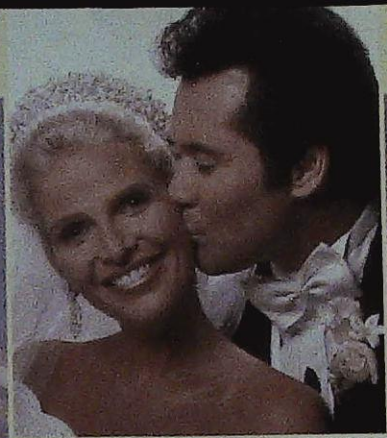


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NIRVANA'S KURT COBAIN (1967-1994)

His anguished
last days—and
why those who
loved him could
not stop his
tragic death





REQUIEM FOR A STAR: Fans mourned Cobain's death at a vigil in Seattle on April 10, and (above) one wreathed a poster with carnations and candles.





KURT COBAIN 1967-1994

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